1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

include, fish, goat, chicken, hare, mutton, buck, and even pork. Apparently carrion is never eaten. The flesh of the deer may be eaten but not that of the tiger. The villager is an adept at preparing vegetables for his curries, and throughout the year depends largely upon the following according to the seasons: *sags* of various kinds; egg plants; pumpkins and gourds; okra; potatoes, both ordinary and sweet; onions; roots of various plants; and corn on the cob roasted until it is brown.

The community feast, or feasts, given to a relatively large group on special occasions, are things which help to break the monotony of diet. Community feasts are usually paid for out of the proceeds of fines levied by the *panch*. An individual also may give a feast as a thank-offering, or at child-birth, at the time of a wedding, or at death. One of the favourite foods is said to be a preparation described below known as *bara*, and is served at every feast. If some social event should make a feast obligatory, and if the person concerned should fail to provide the expected meal, the *panch* brings pressure upon him to do so. If he still fails, the person is boycotted for a period. The usual menu at such a feast includes rice and *chapatis*, pulse, vegetable curry, *chatni*, *bara* and if they can be afforded, meats of various kinds. Kols drink milk when it is available and apparently do not feel that all milk should be kept for the calf, as some Munda tribes believe. Milk is also used in the preparation of certain special foods, such as *khir*, which is used for the child's first feeding. See below.

Foods are usually divided into two classes: *pakka* and *kachha*. The former kind is cooked in *ghi* or *ghi* is used in [redacted] preparation, and the latter is simply cooked with water. *Ghi*, like other products from the sacred cow, protects from impurity. While caste Hindus have numerous restrictions in connection with this classification, the Kols do not seem to be particular in this regard. They will take food cooked by "clean" Hindu castes, but never from those castes which they consider below them, such as Chamars, Mahars, Dhobis, Basors, and Doms. Nowhere Kols seemed to be starved nor emaciated. Apparently, they have enough to keep them in fairly good health, though not in abundance. We did not find stout people among them.

The main food-stuffs are listed below. In an average Kol house all of these are probably not found at any one time, but they are those used when available:

Grains: Wheat, rice, millet (in northern areas).

Pulses: Black pulse (*Phaseolus radiatus*). Red and yellow types (*Cajanus indicus* and *Dolichos lablab*).

Oils: Mustard oil usually from *Guizotia abyssinica*. Sweet oil or

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622 community and has come to be recognized as such largely by his personal worth, wisdom and character. There is no formal election of the head-men; they were recognized as such by a kind of social [624] gravitation. Usually the *Mahato* has an assistant known as the *Chhariberdar*, who does most of the necessary running around. The *Mahato* is not the sole authority and is not empowered to act or even to make decisions of any importance without first consulting the more influential heads of the community. But he usually takes the initiative in calling together the leaders of the local group if factors requiring a meeting come to his knowledge, or if a definite request for it is made.

623 The ultimate authority of the local group rests with the village *panch* or *panchayat*, literally 'the council of five'. The *panch*, however, is not to be thought of as limited to five members only, for it is usually composed of all the influential adult males of the community. They must possess, in the words of the Kols, *"dharam aur dhan"*—piety and property—if they are to be regarded worthy of a place in the *panchayat*. There are however, no elections to the Kol *panchayats*. The leader may or may not recognize one as a member of the group, and while others may attend and even take part in the discussions, they have no right to decide on the ultimate issue.

Practically all major and minor issues affecting the life of the community are decided by the *panch* which thus forms a council for the arbitration of matters pertaining to the community. Its power is really remarkable and the decisions of the *panchayat* are rigidly respected. It is dangerous for a member of the community to go against its advice or decision, for in most cases the *panch* can bring to bear upon the recalcitrant such strong social pressure that he is practically cut off from his community, which means that he is a man without a country or a caste. Personally he may be cut off from all social intercourse, from the use of the well and other village amenities; he is not invited to any functions and is treated as an outcaste. But worse yet, he can neither get his children married, nor admitted into the tribe.

623 Some of the matters which a Kol *panchayat* deals with include
626 the following:

1. Eating and drinking with other castes if such has been forbidden or is against custom.
2. Sexual abberations not approved by the usual Kol practices.
3. Marriage matters: selecting the bride or the bridegroom if there is any difficulty or dispute; arbitration of disputes over financial aspects of the marriage. Irregular unions dealt with and suitable penalties determined.

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4. Divorce and the care of the children.
5. Failure to provide adequately for members of the household.
6. Debt, drink, betting and quarrels.
7. Injury to, or the killing of animals which are considered sacred.
8. Defying the Kol social traditions, not listed above.
9. Deciding upon contributions of money or supplies for group religious observances.
10. Property and inheritance when there is a dispute or doubt.

Should the decision of the *panch* not be accepted in some serious dispute, particularly where real property is involved, the matter may be taken to the civil courts. While this method is open and often threatened, it is seldom resorted to. Kols are not often found in the courts, for there is always the chance that they will lose the case and also have to face social boycott of the *panch* for not heeding its decision and advice. In some matters the *panch* itself may advise going to court. If there is a grave offense, such as murder or theft, the police step in and the matter is taken entirely out of the hands of the community. Nevertheless the Kols boast that they are law abiding and that most sections of them have had no police record whatsoever. Enquiry from the police confirmed this claim; in this respect Kols give no anxiety and the police seldom trouble them when some crime has been committed in the larger villages of which Kols form a part. [625]

When a penalty is decided upon the *panch* sees that it is enforced. If the person to be disciplined is amenable to the *panch* the penalty is usually either a fine or a feast. If the latter, the person must feed the leaders of the community and thus express regret for his act; or if a fine is imposed, such, if realized, is usually used for a feast. In the past it is said that the fines were used for the purchase of alcoholic liquors and drinks, and in some places still are; but now-a-days this seems to be largely abandoned. The fine in some cases might even amount to fifty rupees, but for a Kol this is an excessive amount and it is unlikely that so much is ever declared under ordinary circumstances. Five rupees or so is the usual amount for ordinary violations.

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INTER-VILLAGE COUNCILS. The general social solidarity of the Kols is further shown by the fact that under the more stable conditions of village life, no single village stands alone in making an important decision affecting one of its members, for there are inter-village federations. Sarat Chandra Roy also reports this among the Kharias.[1] In several

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1 *The Kharias*, p. 172.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

(3) Marriage by forcible application of vermilion, (4) Intrusion, (5) Widow.[1] 583

In discussing marriage with the Kols of Central India it was generally found that they recognized only one type of marriage. When asked about the remarriage of widows, they would say "yes", but indicated that while widows could remarry this was nevertheless a concession. A woman, they say, may be truly married but once; a man may be married several times. They know of the intrusion marriage (*Ghar baita*), and one of the stories in connection with the *kurhi* illustrated that form,[2] but it occurs very seldom. A Kolin may go and live as a servant in the house of a man she wants to marry. The man may take her to be his wife, but there is in this case no formal marriage ceremony; nevertheless he must feast the *panchayat* as a penalty. Kols claim that while they have heard of the *sendur* marriage, where the red mark is forcibly applied to the girl's head by her lover in some public place where it can be witnessed, they do not know that it has ever happened among the Kols. At least they professed ignorance of such an occurrence. The known types of marriage, including the elopement marriage which frequently occurs, are dealt with below.

FORMS OF MARRIAGE PRACTISED BY KOLS: 1. *The Elopement Marriage* (*Bhagal*). This type of marriage may take two forms with variations in each. The first type is the least binding and has no recognized standing. If there should be a love match between a couple in the same village or a nearby village, who, because of parental opposition cannot easily be married, and no commitments have been made by the parents on either side to any other arrangement, the couple may decide to go off secretly together. They may go to some friendly relative's home in another village or perhaps will put up a grass hut in which they begin to live and thus start life as man and wife. The young man puts ten black bangles on the girl's wrists, some *sendur* on her forehead, and she is reckoned as his wife. Later on, should the young couple want to return to the village they may be allowed to live there provided that they give a feast as directed by the *panch*. It is unusual, however, that they get off so easily. However, if the young couple who elope are within prohibited degrees of relationship or if they are not of the same *kurhi* they cannot be received back into the community and must become virtual outcastes from those who know them. They will probably be forced to

1 Roy, S. C., *The Kharias*, p. 229.
2 See pages 35, 39.

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

583 migrate to a place where nothing is known of their history, for if
626 they should try to remain they cannot enter into the life of any community of that area unless they cast their lot with the lowest of the low.

583 The above form of the elopement marriage does not have the same
586 standing as the regular forms. If such a union should break up, and
623 the woman go to live with another man, the first man has no right to make a formal complaint to the *panch*, nor can he claim her nor any compensation for her. The *panch* takes no responsibility for irregular unions and this fact is a real deterrent. Marriage would thus seem to have the marks of a contract; it binds the two persons and gives certain proprietory rights which are enforced by the community.

583 The second type of elopement marriage attempts to regularize
585 the procedure after a couple has eloped. In this manner a control
837 over such cases is exercised, and certain obligations must be met or
623 there is a severe social penalty. If a boy runs off with a girl already married, who has also been through the *gauna*[1] part of the total cycle, but who has not become the actual property of her husband, he is required by the *panch* to refund to the party to whom the girl was first married all the expenses in connection with the *lagan*, the *sadi* and the *gauna*. This is a very heavy burden which few would undertake to face, for it may amount to as much as a hundred rupees. And even if he is able to pay he still has to feast the *panch*, and they see that he does it well. Following all this the regular marriage ceremony must be performed with its additional costs and obligations, before the couple are allowed to live together. This makes such an elopement a very costly affair, and the *panch* is in the position absolutely to enforce these penalties.

[584] If the *gauna* has not yet occurred and the girl elopes with another boy, all he has to do is to pay a penalty to the *panch*, but before they are allowed to live together the regular *sadi* must be performed. No *gauna* is thereafter necessary and they begin to cohabit. The regulations are thus much more severe if the *gauna* is passed than if the elopement occurred before it. There are variations in procedure, but this seems to be the custom.

114 2. *The Recognized Form of Marriage* (*Biwah*, *Biyah*). The
184 description which follows is one compiled from investigations made in
583 many places. When we first learned of the marriage customs of the
584 Kols who lived close to Jubbulpore, we thought that the customs

1 See page 93.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

584 him verbally (give *gali*), take all kinds of liberties with him and try
252 their best to make him lose his temper. He is supposed to take no
[578] notice of this but to remain calmly at his work. After the *lawa* is prepared (the man does not prepare all that is required) it is put into
[530] a new *ghara* decorated with pictures representing females. Sometimes other articles are also put into the *ghara* –uncooked rice, bits of *supari* nut, *haldi* and two-pice coins. When prepared at the bride-groom's house the *lawa* is kept to be taken with the boy's party on their trip to the girl's village for the *sadi* and is there mixed with the *lawa* prepared in the girl's house for use at the time of the wedding. The preparation of the *lawa*, which is made a day or two before the group
[574 leaves for the wedding, is made the occasion for the reconciliation of
626 estranged relatives within the village and the consequent restoration
578] of friendship. This reconciliation may also be extended to any member of the *kurhi* with whom there have been unhappy relations.

584 (*b*) *Marriage Booth: Marhwa.* In the meantime there has been
349 far more to do at the girl's house where the actual wedding is to take place, for the wedding booth (*marhwa* or *mandap*) must be constructed there. This is usually set up in the courtyard immediately in front of the girl's house. In this booth the essentials of the marriage ceremony are performed and the sacred pole is fixed at its centre. Male relatives of the bridegroom help to build it, but women must have nothing to do with its construction. Before the men who come to work can actually start operations the bridegroom must have his body
[302 rubbed with *til* oil mixed with *haldi*. The anointing should be done
602 by his sister or another close female relative and he should then be
593] dressed in clothes which have been dipped in *haldi* water. The construction of the *marhwa* may now begin.

584 The *marhwa* is constructed of prescribed kinds of wood. Its
349 size varies, but is usually about eight feet square and six to seven feet
824 high. Nine poles are used in its construction, including the central post, called the *magrohan*, which however does not reach up to the roof. *Saleh* (*Boswellia serrata*) is the most favoured kind of wood and if procurable is preferred, both for the framework of the booth and for the sacred pole at its centre. The eight remaining poles are arranged so that there are three on a side. Text figure 21 will make this clear.[1] If *saleh* wood is not available, *gular* (*Ficus glomerata*), *sal* (*Sheora robusta*), *char* (*Buchanania latifola*) or even bamboo are permissible. The central post, however, must be of *saleh* wood and they search far and wide until they have found it. The leaves of the banana plant are tied to each of the eight poles and over the top. The

[1] [on p. 86.–Awalysi]